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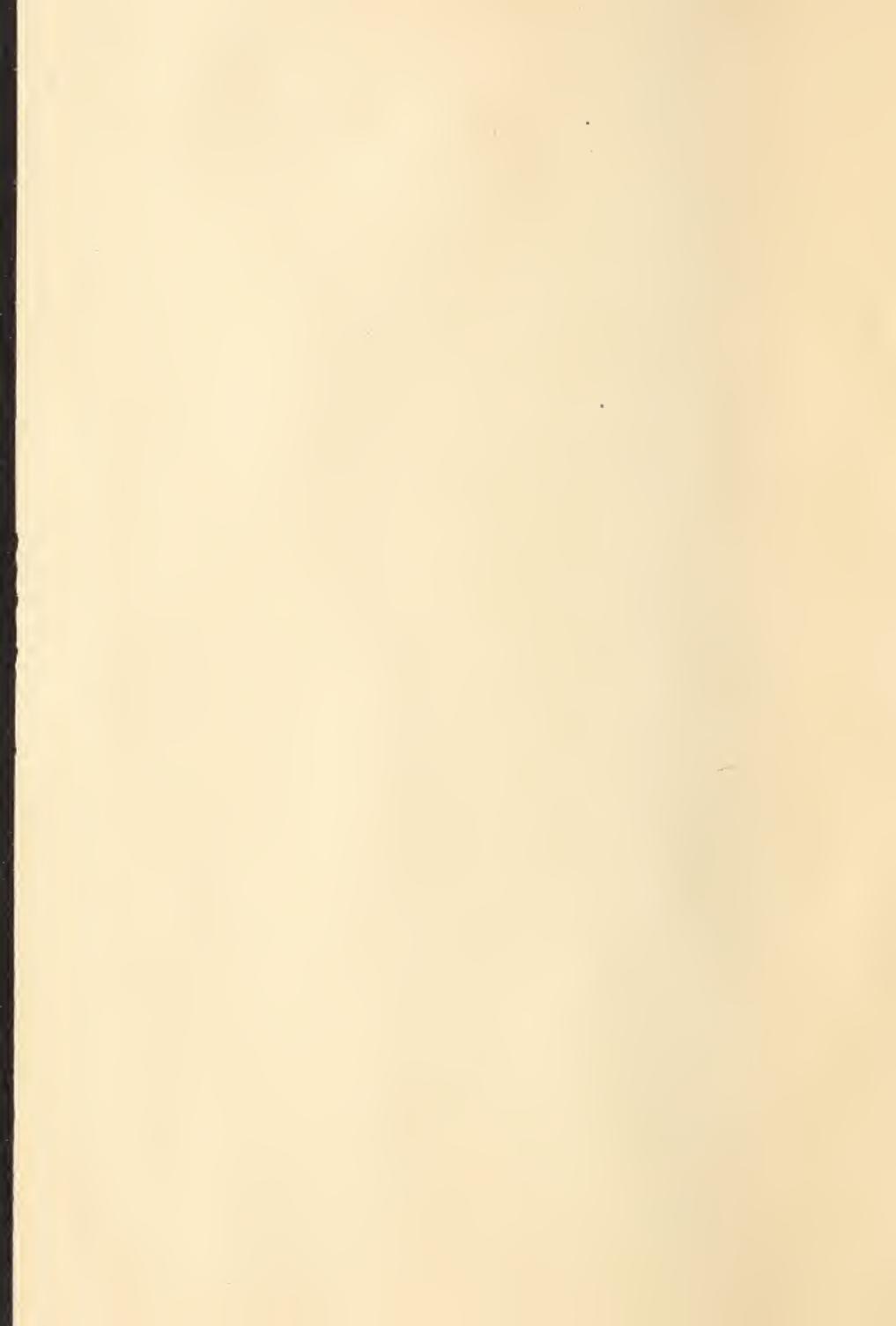
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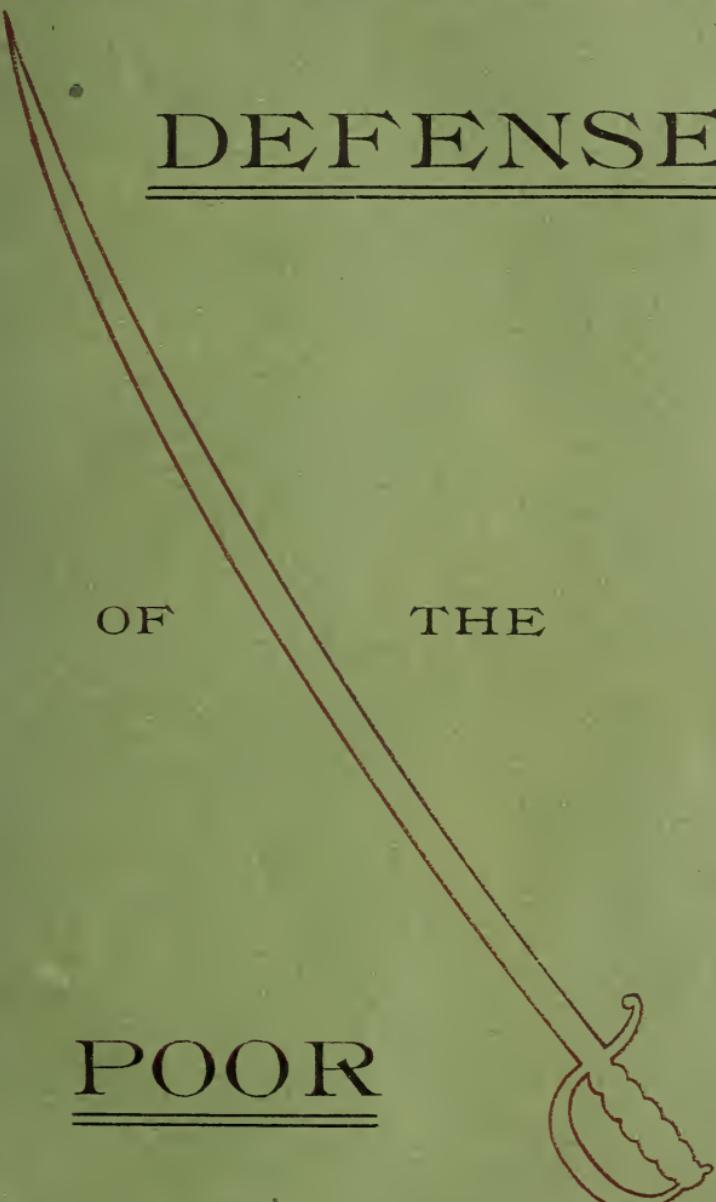
1925











DEFENSE  
OF THE  
POOR

*—NEWSOM.*



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*To pity distress is human; to relieve it is God-like.*

—Horace Mann.



## THE HOMELESS.

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God help the homeless, wanderers o'er the earth,  
For whom no roof inclines its sheltering eaves;  
No fireside glows; no voice of love or mirth  
Calls to the garden flowers, the hillside sheaves.

—EDNER DEAN PROCTOR.

If, thickly clad, my shivering limbs are shaken  
By the chill snow-whirl, as it hurries past,  
What must their suffering be, thus overtaken,  
Whose vesture thin can scarce withstand the blast?

—JAMES M. STEWART.

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JOHN T. C. NEWSOM,

2002 13th St., N. W.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1913

*The poor is hated even of his neighbors; but the rich hath many friends.—Prov. XIV:20.*

*Through tattered clothes small vices do appear;  
robes and furred gowns hide all.—Shakespeare.*

HC 110  
P 6 N 2

# DEFENSE

# OF THE POOR;

—OR,—

# POVERTY AND ITS RESULTING EVILS

—BY—

J. T. C. NEWSOM.  
||

Author—

“Lost by Love; or, The Folly of Flirting.”  
“The Secrets of Success; or, Getting on in the World.”  
“The Composer’s Friend, and Compendium of Useful  
Information.” The bequest of

Daniel Murray,  
Washington, D. C.  
1925

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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Technically speaking, the poor need no defense; for, innately they, of all grades of our social fabric, are the most honest-hearted, the most sympathetic, the most pure of purpose and the least troublesome of all. We find much in them, therefore, to commend; also, some things to condemn. As a rule, that which we find in them to criticise and condemn as a class, is put there by necessity and not by choice.

The purpose of this little book is not to exculpate or excuse any existing social disorder on the score of poverty; but, to show by careful reasoning from cause to effect, on the conditions that confront us, that many of the evils which harass and distract our social system and our political life are due, in great part, to a lack of the necessities, comforts and opportunities of life, thus pointing the way to an improved and a healthier public condition.

—The Author.

## CONTENTS.

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### POVERTY

- “ and BALLOT, THE
- “ “ CHARITY
- “ “ CITIZENSHIP, GOOD
- “ “ CRIME
- “ “ DISEASE
- “ “ DRUNKENNESS AND INSANITY
- “ “ IGNORANCE
- “ “ PREJUDICE
- “ “ SUCCESS, BUSINESS AND SOCIAL
- “ “ WEALTH AND WAGES
- “ “ SINGLE TAX, AND THE

# DEFENSE OF THE POOR.

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## POVERTY.

"Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy."—Prov. XXXI:9.

In reverent obedience to the divine injunction, and in zealous sympathy with the cause of the poor, this plea is earnestly undertaken, hoping that my message may reach the responding heart, if not the pocket, of those in more fortunate circumstances.

In defending the cause of the poor and condemning the evils of poverty, I do not wish to be understood as representing that the poor are universally good and deserving, any more than are the rich invariably bad or vicious; but, what I do mean to say, and shall endeavor to impress in the pages which are to follow, is that many of the evils which flesh is heir to—many of the failures and short-comings of life—for which the poor are universally blamed, are the direct result of a needy condition. Even so, many of those whose names now adorn the pages of criminal annals, have been made criminals from necessity, and not from choice. Poverty has been the blighting force which has turned the tide and ruined the life of many an otherwise worthy and well-meaning young man and young woman! It is the parent of temptation, whose sinister, damnable influence continues to gnaw at the vitals of man's morals!

Year by year unsanitary housing, other unsanitary conditions and the lack of proper medical attention, due

to poverty, continue to swell the death lists. Percentages worked out by experts, based on racial traits, and foreign and alien causes, fail to explain and justify.

So, while we shall endeavor to turn the finger of blame and censure, which continues to point to the poor, and give the true explanation, we are not seeking to exculpate anybody or anyone on the plea of poverty, nor shift any responsibility from its rightful owner or position to the shoulders of the rich.

Says the Hon. Gifford Pinchot, ex-chief of the U. S. Forest Service, "A man is not bad because he is rich, nor good because he is poor—there is no monopoly of virtue."—And still more emphatically is it true that there is no monopoly of vice. Riches do not make virtue, nor does poverty always make vice. Fatal, indeed, would be the mistake, should we adopt this philosophy as the basis of our social and business systems.

Mr. Pinchot continues, "We have allowed the great corporations to occupy the strategic points in business, in social and political life.

There are many men who believe, and who will always believe, in the divine right of money to rule. With such men argument, compromise or conciliation is useless, or worse." To such we are not speaking.

## THE POOR AND THE BALLOT.

The curtailment of the ballot among the Negro race, in the several Southern States, U. S. A., as well as its abridgement and total denial to some in other countries, is the direct result of poverty. Color and caste prejudice play but a small and insignificant part.

Indeed, the time may come (and let us candidly confess that there is now a regrettable tendency in that direction) when aristocrats, i. e., the very rich only, may be allowed to vote. Educational and property qualifications of the present age, may be merely the pri-

mary steps toward a stricter and more drastic qualification, based upon wealth only.

Money rules the law, and as a rule, only men of wealth can hope to be elected as law-makers.

The influence of the stock exchanges, and other moneyed interests, dominate the very halls of Congress, yea, the "White House" itself; for, no man can hope to be elected to the presidential chair of the United States, unless he is pledged in advance to protect and promote those interests, or is put there by them.

The investigation into campaign contributions, now going on before the Clapp Committee, has disclosed a situation truly rotten and alarming! The citizen of small means, who cast his ballot (and that ballot sometimes purchased) and then went home, feeling that he was a part of the government and a potent and positive force, in the election of its officers and making of it, has awakened to the disgusting fact that he is a pitiable nonentity!

Who can dispute that, encouraged and emboldened by past successes, they may finally move to restrict the ballot to the rich only? Let us hope and pray that it may not come to this.

Political nominations, even through the sham agencies of *primaries* (to use the most charitable characterization) are but hollow mockeries; and elections are determined purely by the size of the purse.

In the simple, good, old colonial days, when patriotism and conscience ruled, bribery and dishonesty in elections were unknown. Then, the gentleman and the Christian in politics were as common as graft, now, in a New York police department. Then, rival political candidates not infrequently dined together and exchanged visits. It is not difficult to understand the influences which have operated to change this happy condition of things—money, fierce and conscienceless commercialism,

which has operated to minimize the influence of the poor man in politics.

## POVERTY AND CHARITY.

The best way to help a man is not by indiscriminate charity; but help him to help himself. — Give him an opportunity to labor and to own his own home.

The man accustomed to walking with a crutch or a cane seldom walks without one, if he can get it. Strong children are made by taking away the go-cart, now and then, even though the child does get an occasional bump. Mr. Carnegie tells the simple truth and states the situation exactly when he says, "Private charity must be discriminating, in order to be useful. Mere pauperism will be bred by indiscriminate charity. Let a multimillionaire take his millions to the slums and call the people together, saying there is a wrong distribution of wealth in the world; you have not got your share; I give to each of you his share in my millions. Let that be done in the morning and let the millionaire return at night to see what good his action has done, and he will find not happiness, but pandemonium. Let him distribute another million and another million every day for a month and pauperism will increase every day. He has done more injury in a month than he will do good all the rest of his life."

What Mr. Carnegie says as to private charity is equally true of public charity, unless a great deal of care and discrimination is exercised.

The establishment and maintenance of a municipal Employment Agency, for the relief of the needy and industrious poor, under the auspices of the Associated Charities, it seems, would be a wise and helpful provision.

We rejoice in our Carnegie and his libraries. We are proud of him and the magnanimity of his magnificent gifts; but, it is a question with us whether a full

head is better than a full stomach—whether a few thousands, at least, of his immense fortune cannot more profitably be given directly to the unfortunate and worthy poor, to relieve distress at our doors, or expended by increasing the wages of his hired workmen in the mines. This we would call benevolence, true and practical.

We hope Mr. Carnegie's example will not wholly destroy or discourage the older and more genial school of philanthropists, who believe in directing their energies more toward relieving physical want and distress at our doors. With such men it is difficult to turn the deaf ear to hungry and suffering humanity, and to ease their consciences by burning up the begging letters or giving a few thousands to the establishment of public libraries. I do not attempt to undervalue these "universities for the people," but I ask, who are the ones whom these great book houses mostly benefit? Certainly not the poor, not the ignorant, not the one who suffers most from the lack of a full coal bin, proper clothing to protect his shivering frame, or sufficient food to satisfy his hungry stomach; but the man of means, of research and of leisure.

The poor—the people who most need assistance—are the ones who have the least time, and, I may say, the least need for such institutions; for they are too busy trying to solve the problems of life—their time for reading is limited.

In the dedicatory address at Washington, D. C., Mr. Carnegie made the confession that giving was one of the hardest things he ever undertook in his life. With the suffering poor of this country, the hardest thing is getting.

## TO THE MAN WHO FAILS.

Let others sing to the hero who wins in the ceaseless  
fray,  
Who, over the crushed and the fallen, pursueth his up-  
ward way;  
For him let them weave the laurel, to him be their paean  
sung,  
Whom the kindly fates have chosen, who are happy  
their loved among.  
But mine be a different message, some soul in its stress  
to reach;  
To bind, o'er the wound of failure, the balm of pitying  
speech;  
To whisper: "Be up and doing, for courage at last  
prevails."  
I sing—who have supped with Failure—I sing to the  
man who fails.  
  
I know how the grey cloud darkens, and mantles the  
soul in gloom;  
I know how the spirit harkens to voices of doubt or of  
doom;  
I know how the tempter mutters his terrible word,  
"Despair!"  
But the heart has its secret chamber, and I know that  
our God is there.  
Our years are as moments only; our failures he counts  
as naught;  
The stone that the builders rejected, perchance, is the  
one that he sought.  
Mayhap, in the ultimate judgment, the effort alone  
avails.  
And the laurel of great achievement shall be for the  
man who fails.  
  
We sow in the darkness only; but the reaper shall reap  
in light,

And the day of his perfect glory shall tell of the deeds  
of the night;  
We gather our gold and store it, and the whisper is  
heard, "Success!"  
But, tell me, ye cold, white sleepers, what were achieve-  
ment less?  
We struggle for fame, and win it, and, lo! like a fleet-  
ing breath,  
It is lost in a realm of silence whose ruler and king is  
"Death."  
Where are the Norseland heroes, the ghosts of a house-  
wife's tales?  
I sing—for the Father heeds him—I sing to the man  
who fails.

Oh, men, who are labeled "failures," up, up! again,  
and do!  
Somewhere in the world of action is room; there is room  
for you.  
No failure was e're recorded, in the annals of truthful  
men,  
Except of the cravenhearted who fails, nor attempts  
again.  
The glory is in the doing, and not in the trophy won;  
The walls that are laid in darkness may laugh to the  
kiss of the sun.  
Oh, weary and worn and stricken; oh, child of fate's  
cruel gales!  
I sing—that it happily may cheer him—I sing to the  
man who fails.

—*Alfred J. Waterhouse.*

## POVERTY AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

Poverty is not only a great enemy to honesty and in-  
nocence, but to human happiness and pleasure as well;  
it destroys liberty, lowers a man in self-respect, makes

some virtues impracticable, others extremely difficult and still others impossible.

"The poor man," says Matthews, "is hourly beset by troops of temptations which the rich man never knows." It has been demonstrated by statistics that times of economic depression are invariably followed by increase of crime. These times of economic depression are the result of ill-advised laws and misapplied charity. The hot-beds of vice, and the saddest features of humanity are, as a rule, found in the crowded districts of want and beggary, where pauperism presents itself in its very worst form. Not only this, but they are the places where are found the implements and dupes of the demagogue, the revolutionist, the Mafia and the red-handed anarchist.

Desperate, indeed, is the condition of him who faces the awful perils of poverty! It was Dr. Northrup, that distinguished educator, I believe, who said, "he who owns a house and lot gives bonds to society for good behavior." How true! Think of it! A property-owning man will hesitate long before committing that deed which means the confiscation of his possessions, or his banishment from the State, so that he cannot enjoy them. In keeping with the same thought is this contribution from ex-Governor Alva Adams, of Colorado: "Who is master of the soil controls the government, morals and destiny of the people \* \* \* You cannot buy, coerce or corrupt the ballot of a homeowner \* \* \* The agitator is seldom a tax-payer; the naked and the hungry can never make ideal citizens. The wildest anarchist becomes tame, when he gets a bank account \* \* \* Ownership of land makes the citizen a partner in the government; his title deed is a perpetual bond for good conduct."

If the State would improve the quality of its citizenship and insure happiness, let it take a more positive and advanced step in encouraging and aiding in the

securing of homes, and improving the material condition of its citizens. "Peaceful sleeps the soul contented in the house owned, not rented." The capital lesson to learn is that the interest of each of us is the interest of all. It should be the concern of the State, therefore, to make it as easy as possible for the citizen to do right. Remove temptations by removing the cause—by improving the citizen's industrial condition.

With the right sort of a man, the happiness he has in life is measured by the happiness he gives to others. Men are not beggars from *choice*; but are made so by reason of being victims of *circumstances*. These circumstances are partly the laws under which we live, and partly discrimination; for *man* is as much the creature of *government*, as *government* the creature of *man*.

A few years since, a raid was made by the police officers of the city of Washington upon all those couples who were living in illegal cohabitation, or those who were violating the act known as the "Edmunds Law." An enterprising and patriotic paper of this city, thereupon, offered free licenses and marriage fees to all contracting parties who desired to live honest and virtuous lives, and forsake their lives of illicit intercourse. As a result, 284 people or 142 couples, accepted the opportunity offered, thus showing that *poverty*, though not *wholly*, was *partly* responsible for these breaches of *law* and *morals*.

## POVERTY AND CRIME.

It is when we come to consider poverty's responsibility for crime and other misdemeanors, that the drastic influences of this stupendous social evil are really understood. The responsibility has been traced to a degree exceedingly alarming. Enforced idleness, through failure to secure work, low wages and the lack of the necessities and comforts of life, the environments of the slums and alleys, all conspire to brand poverty the peren-

nial parent of crime. True, poverty does not always produce crime, neither are all crimes the result of poverty. There are those rugged, lofty spirits whom no condition of want or suffering can force to the commission of a criminal act.

Then, there are some in whom criminal instincts seem to be inborn—in whom there is a natural depravity amounting almost to predestination, and all the wealth of the world cannot remove their criminal tendencies. But, while poverty cannot be claimed to explain the presence of these abnormal traits, it certainly offers an appropriate occasion for an outburst; and, while we make no attempt to excuse the commission of any crime, it must be conceded that many crimes are directly traceable to a needy condition. Generally, there must be motives for all crimes. What I am discussing is the rule, not the exception. Poverty produces an inability to resist evil, and should be avoided by all virtuous means. It is difficult to be virtuous, useful and efficient when burdened with poverty. As with the traveller who is fatigued and worn out, the keen sense of propriety and decency is lessened, and he is ready to appropriate a stump, the curb, or even the ground, to rest his weary frame; so with one in a condition of poverty and want, the moral sensibilities hitherto active and acute are benumbed, and one is readily captured in the meshes of the net which fortuitous circumstances have woven around him, and, as Shakespeare says, "their poverty, and not their will, consents." That is to say, with the lowering of the nerve tone, almost invariably comes the lowering of the moral tone. "It is difficult," says Abraham Lincoln, "for an empty sack to stand upright." This homely truth is further strengthened by the words of the following distinguished gentlemen: "It is hard for a hungry man to be honest"—Booker T. Washington. "A man cannot serve God with an empty stomach"—Woodrow Wilson. "I don't keer,"

said Uncle Eph on his way home from church, "I don't keer whut de preachah say 'bout de blessin's uv povahty, an' bein' satisfied wid a crus' er bread, I tell you I kin serve de Lawd a heap bettah w'en my stomick am full an' my pocket ain't empty." Uncle Eph's philosophy here expounded is of the soundest, and the sooner our statesmen, philanthropists and clergymen recognize this truth, the better it will be for society at large.

Hon. Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner of Labor, in discussing the causes of crime, before the Y. M. C. A., in this city, sometime ago gave as the result of his very careful and extensive investigation and analysis of the subject (aside from a few cases of sporadic depravity) poverty and drink as the chief causes of crime. According to his investigations, economic depressions are invariably accompanied by increase of crime, as proven by statistics. "The way, therefore, to lessen crime," urges Mr. Wright, "is not merely to repress and punish criminals, but to so improve economic conditions as to remove their incentives."

The late Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, in discussing the relation of poverty to crime, had this to say: "There are," said he, "very few bad people in the world; that is, those who are naturally bad, and want to be bad. As a rule, people are the victims of circumstances; and, if the circumstances of some of us were the same, our lives might be just as bad or worse. There are exigencies in the lives of men and women when they need help, and when a friendly hand can save a human life."

Oh, if men were only more considerate of the interests of their brothers, and less pharisaical in their pretensions and professions!

## POVERTY AND DISEASE.

"To the man of wealth," says Cyrus Edson, "there should be a direct and very great concern in the well-

being of the man of poverty. The former cannot afford, therefore, to sit at his well-covered table and forget the absence of fire or food in the latter's poor room; because, that absence means, sooner or later, that disease will break out in the room and microbes and their spores will, in time, pass the heavy curtains on the windows of the mansions to find their prey on the inside." Who will deny that the consumption of impure and, hence, unwholesome food (which only the poor are compelled to use) is responsible for a large number of deaths?

Poverty is responsible for physical delinquencies in children, brought on by mental strain in the parents undergoing hardships and deprivations while striving to drive the wolf from the door. Physical delinquency is further brought about by lack of time for sufficient recreation, for proper development and good health. Such recreations, because of insufficient clothing and improper sanitary conditions, often becoming a menace rather than a pleasure and a blessing.

The proverb that "The hen's eggs will taste of the roaches," expresses the idea. It means that when the *parents* are raised in poverty, want and ignorance, the *children* will be the worse for it. On the same order, we have the Biblical warning that "The parents have eaten our grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

Disease and death in the courts and alleys, and in the dark tenement houses, where there is not a single pane of glass to filter the light from the sun, are largely the result of want. With fever and other diseases stalking abroad, a little weak tea and a little dry bread are but poor fortifications against the ravages of disease. The enormous mortality among colored people, who are universally poor, comparatively speaking, is explained by the light of these facts.

The last annual report of Health Officer Woodward,

in which the mortality of the colored race in the city of Washington, as compared with that of the whites, is made to appear almost double, is very unjust, is flagrant! No conclusion relative to the comparative mortality of the two races can be fair and just, no report exact, that does not, at the same time, take into consideration the enforced unsanitary and, hence, unhealthy conditions that are forced upon the Negro by reason of his poverty and his environments.

Take away the unfavorable environments mentioned above, and the conditions which favor this result, and the figures of Mr. Woodward, and the declaration of Amos G. Warner that "The colored people are weak, physically, become sick easily, and often die without almost any visible resistance to disease," considered as a natural result, will fall flat. It is the condition, by reason of poverty, and not the color or the nationality which causes the result.

The alarming, and apparently increasing, percentage of deaths from tuberculosis, has been traced directly to poverty, which stands in the way of sunlight, wholesome food and fresh air—the never-failing preventives of consumption. To forever stamp out this dreaded disease, we need a larger and more flexible individual and national conscience, to the end that a just and lasting distribution of wealth may be effected.

The Chicago Record-Herald, of a recent date, contains the following highly suggestive, if not convincing statistics of pauperism and bad sanitary conditions in England:

"There was issued recently in England a report by the local government board concerning tuberculosis which contained some interesting statistics on the death rate from the disease in the United Kingdom taken in connection with the statistics of paupers. It was shown that the mortality from consumption had declined from 3.99 per thousand living in 1838 to 2.77 per thousand

in 1885 and to 1.15 per thousand in 1906, an actual decrease in deaths from 59,025 to 39,746 in sixty-eight years. A second series of figures indicated that during fifty years the ratio of paupers per thousand in England and Wales had dropped from 48 to 25, while the death rate from consumption had declined from 27 to 10 in 10,000. Comparisons were given also for Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland the ratio of paupers had fallen from 23 to 13 and deaths by consumption from 40 to 22. In Ireland, where the ratio of paupers has risen in forty years from 11 to 23, the death rate from consumption has increased from 17 to 20."

### POVERTY, DRUNKENNESS AND INSANITY.

Poverty not only causes disease and crime; but, it is also the parent of drunkenness and insanity. It has been estimated, for instance, that the "drinking habit," in one-half of the cases, is induced by poverty, to soothe the feelings of trouble or despair, or for the purpose of sustaining or restoring vital powers.

Women are equal sharers with men in poverty and mental strain; but, generally, they do not fall into intemperate habits, because it is natural for all female animals to protect and care for their offspring. It is not only common for males in lower animal life to do this, but they often even destroy their offspring, if they can. So in lowest savage *human* life, the mother conceals her children from the father who wishes to destroy them, to promote sex-hunger. Human mothers will sacrifice their lives and their all for their children. Mothers in poverty will not fool away their money on "drink," when their children are needing food, clothing, schooling and shelter. The divine instinct embodied in her nature forbids it. The same instinct and dignity of sex, by a fixed trait of heritage, is found in women who are not mothers.

Speaking to Sanitary Officer Frank, of Washington,

D. C., some time ago, concerning the relative number of cases of insanity of the white and colored races, I was told by that officer that, while the number of whites who are brought before the courts suffering with mental derangements are largely in excess of the colored, even to the percentage, that the number of colored patients is rapidly increasing.

Since the admission by insanity experts that a diseased mental state may be brought on by a reduction to a condition of poverty of one who once lived in luxury, it opens up the interesting question whether people, white or colored (with sensibilities just as fine), and who have known nothing but poverty all their lives, may not be sufficiently sensitive to bring about a diseased mental state. Says Pope:

"Behold what blessings wealth to life can lend!  
And see what comforts it affords our end!"

The following news item comes from the nearby commonwealth of Virginia: "Richmond, Va., Feb. 11th.—The discussion in the Senate yesterday of the bill appropriating \$16,342.40 to meet a deficiency at the Western State Hospital at Staunton brought out the fact that there is a marked increase of insanity in Virginia, which experts attribute to the poverty of the people who once lived in luxury."

So, it appears that many and various are the evils of poverty. Directly or indirectly, there seems to be a never-ending train of maleficent consequences to this unfortunate condition of a large proportion of our population.

### POVERTY AND IGNORANCE.

Poverty and ignorance! What a dreadful combination! Handicapped by the one, the other is as sure to follow as the night the day. True, many poor boys have risen to eminence and success; but to how much

greater heights might they have risen, had their ambitions and opportunities not been curbed and restricted by this arch enemy to success—poverty. I have yet to see that the percentage of successful poor boys is higher than that of successful rich boys.

Opportunities for an education are cut short by numerous obstacles which poverty imposes: the inability to attend school, because of the necessity to labor; the lack of clothing, books and other utensils necessary to complete an education; ill health brought on by lack of proper food, recreation or medical attention.

Said Miss Julia C. Lathrop, secretary Children's Bureau, Department of Commerce and Labor, in a recent address: "Again it is poverty which makes the natural recreations of childhood a danger rather than a pure joy. It is poverty that cuts short education and sends children to work before the age when physical and mental growth justify continuous toil. Poverty and ignorance and disease—whoever wishes to abolish poverty must work to abolish the three.

To work for the abolition of poverty is to enlist in a new profession, than which none nobler has ever developed into the dignity of a science from the chaos of kindheartedness."

Poverty and ignorance! While these two evils are reciprocal in their baneful effects, the consideration of ignorance as one of the resultants of poverty, here inevitably brings into discussion the relative value of their antitheses—wealth and education—as vital and practical necessities, with the latter the favorite. The value of a thing is largely affected by the ability to retain it. The educated rich man can more easily husband his wealth than the ignorant rich man—hence, the ignorance evil here especially receives our attention and condemnation as a result of poverty, and it should be avoided by all laudable means. The ignorant rich man finds it much

more difficult to protect his wealth than the intelligent rich man.

Again, poverty cuts short the ability to travel, to see and to learn, thus barring two of our greatest educative forces. Ignorance can be avoided by destroying its parent evil—poverty. For this purpose, and to this end, federal aid for the material betterment of the citizen inevitably forces itself upon our argument and attention as logical and philosophical remedies.

Poverty, though sometimes a seeming incentive to education and improvement, seldom offers an advantage not gained by a condition of wealth. The impression that it does do so is gained by the expectancy which a condition of wealth excites. Hence, when a poor boy rises to eminence and renown, the fact is more noticeable and attracts greater comment and attention than when a rich boy attains the same height.

Poverty, by no law of reason, by no rule of moral or ethical experience, can be advanced or argued as an incentive or aid to education and distinction.

### **POVERTY AND PREJUDICE.**

Prejudice always did exist, and always will, on the part of the rich or aristocratic classes of all nations, against the poor of those nations, whether black or white. It is this prejudice against which the peasantry of Europe is struggling today. It was partly this prejudice which brought the discrimination against the Jews to such an acute stage in the "Middle Ages," and not wholly because of their religious belief (the source of another species of deep-seated prejudice) as is commonly supposed. In America this caste prejudice is aggravated and intensified by the fact of color, and has taken on the more violent form of race prejudice.

In the solution of the great problems of prejudice and discrimination great and fatal mistakes are often made by our leaders, in proceeding upon the theory that

the chief factors in their solution are education and industrial training. These are important and necessary factors in the solution of these great problems, to be sure, and we do not decry their great value and importance. Let us have more education, more industrial and moral training; but, as Prof. Kelly Miller says, "The issues of life today are material, rather than moral, and are placed on a hard, unsentimental, metallic basis . . . . The dollar is the highest common divisor, in terms of which we measure all forms of excellence—yes, even human rights."

In this day of cruel commercialism, when the watch-word is more *wealth*, more *luxury*, more *ease*; when the national conscience has been warped and tainted by the idea of gold-getting and commercial advantage, education amounts to nothing, only so far as it can be turned into dollars and cents. It was this spirit of commercial greed and rapacity which caused the Spanish-American and Boer-English wars, and not solely the spirit of humanity, as subsequent events have proven true. This is a practical age. The spirit of commercialism stands out like a Matterhorn in the world's activities. We must either be prepared to sing well our part in the national chant, or stand aside; no discord will be allowed. It, therefore, becomes the poor man to keep up with the spirit of the times—"to catch the spreading notion of the town," as Pope would put it. Let him relax nothing, but strive mightily, earnestly and long to get a firmer hold and a more exalted station in the commercial world. In other words, he should get money—get all the money he can, without injuring his conscience or his soul. It is not enough that we lend all our efforts to the *accumulation* of wealth; but, having gotten it, we should use it in every possible way to make it command respect. This can be done only through organized and co-operative business concerns and methods.

## POVERTY, BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SUCCESS.

To be poor is no disgrace, but it is universally admitted that it is terribly inconvenient, embarrassing and annoying—annoying not only to the individual personally, but to his environments and aspirations; herein lies the evil.

Many a bright and promising intellect has been handicapped and restrained in its capabilities, ambitions and attainments on account of lack of means to prosecute its aims and purposes.

“Chill penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul,”

and the world became the loser thereby. The blighting power of poverty is very aptly expressed in this stanza from Johnson:

“This mournful truth  
Is everywhere confessed;  
Slow rises worth, when  
By poverty oppressed.”

When Pope wrote,

“The grave Sir Gilbert holds it for a rule,  
That every man in want is knave or fool,”

he should have gone further and given the prevailing estimate placed upon the poor by the world in general, and not stopped with giving merely Sir Gilbert's personal opinion of the needy.

“A blind man is a poor man, and blind a poor man is;  
For the former seeth no man, and the latter no man  
sees.”

The poor man is not only not seen in social affairs, but is unnoticed in both business and church matters.

Another, but by no means least of poverty's evils, is the blasting effect which they have on the world's advancement in science, art and invention.

Such is the constitution of society today that to be

poor is to be suspicious; but poverty cannot be cured by regarding its victim as a knave or criminal. Persons who have never been guilty of a dishonorable act or thought have felt the winter winds course through a shabby coat, while thousands of the comfortable rich, if they do not occupy felons' cells, they ought to be there.

The late Rev. D. J. Stafford, of St. Mary's Church, Washington, gave this wholesome and timely advice:

"A mutual respect should subsist between both classes. The rich man who denies the poor laborer just and fair compensation is a thief; the laboring man who does not give in return a just and fair day's labor is a thief likewise. Labor is as honorable in the man who works with his hands as with his brain—both are manifestations of energy, each is necessary to the other."

"Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness; it certainly destroys liberty, and it makes some virtues impracticable and others extremely difficult. It lowers a man in self-respect, places him at the mercy of his tradesmen and his servant, and renders him a slave in many respects; for he can no longer call himself his own master, nor boldly look the world in the face.

How many people are dull or unsociable from the secret irritation of want of money; how many bright intelligences are diverted from their highest development from the same cause."—Matthews.

In fact poverty is so full of evils, of difficulties and obstacles, that we scarcely know where they begin and where they end—which is first and which last—which greatest and which least. The difficulties which it creates are felt and known only by the poor.

Finally, it is interesting, if not convincing, how the many blighting and baneful evils from which humanity suffers can be traced back as being directly resultant from poverty, the great, o'ertowering, parent evil which, like the Upas tree of Java, with its many

branches, ever pours forth its poisonous and deadly exudations.

Another thing, the very appearance, these days, of prosperity and success, is absolutely necessary. Where poverty and a foothold were once regarded as insignificant obstacles to success, they are now looked upon as almost unsurmountable, even to the most ambitious, economical and energetic.

In the pioneer times of crude fashions, the shabby, barefooted boy, with his pants bagging at the knees and his hair kissing the rays of the sun, could get a job, where dress and refinement are now imperatively required, even for a respectable interview.

Conditions are different now from what they were in the days of the "Mill Boy of the Slashes;" when Lincoln went rail-splitting and Garfield trod the tow-path. At that time, one-half of the country, at least, was undeveloped and unsettled and competition was not so keen; then, any young man who had a reasonable amount of energy and brains and was able to get in on the "ground floor," could succeed. At that time conditions were not so fixed as they are now, and opportunities to succeed were more plentiful. These are two chances, at least, which have disappeared forever.

Immense combinations of capital have since sprung up and now stare the ambitious young man in the face, and it is not reasonable to suppose that, because the coal trust or the oil syndicate, if you please, has made money (having very little capital to begin with) a second coal trust can arise and be just as successful.

Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London, did, indeed, begin life with the possession of only a cat; but this does not necessarily imply that any young man, having no greater start in life, can rise to such eminence. He might arm himself with forty cats, for that

matter, and yet remain in ignoble obscurity all his life.

Finally, I cannot close this article without quoting this apt contribution on the dignity of labor and our duty toward social recognition of the poor, from an unknown author:

“There is a sentiment spreading too largely in the world, which looks upon labor as dishonorable. They forget the beautiful truth uttered by George Herbert:

‘Who sweeps a room as by Thy laws  
Makes that and the action fine.’

The recognition of the dignity of labor — that is one great step toward a better understanding. Hearts that feel for others; souls that demand justice for our neighbors, as well as justice for ourselves; that must help. We can never be at peace; never be within reach of perfect happiness while there is suffering in the world. It is the chief duty of all men to alleviate suffering. Let, therefore, all men—all Christians, all churches, all leaders, in finance, in business, in politics, in labor—come forward to meet this question of social discontent by a great manifestation of love. Doubts will disappear; difficulties be overcome; social unrest will be social calm, and the spirit of discontent change into the spirit of thankfulness, and this gray, old world, so beautiful, so wonderful will move forward into the brilliant and vivifying light that streams from the throne of God.”

#### **POVERTY, WEALTH AND WAGES.**

There is nothing blessed about poverty when it is confined to one or two households or individuals, in a community of others possessing abundance. As a rule, poverty has no blessings, except when everybody else is in the same boat as yourself. There are some blessings in a state of poverty, when it means living wages in a place where health is possible, and nature is the children’s playmate; but how much greater would those

blessings be under a condition of *wealth* in the same place!

That kind of poverty does not do much harm, nor is it that kind that we are here discussing; but the *bitter, grinding* misery of a life of starvation, disease and *disappointments* in an earnest effort to own a home or to make an honest living. The blessings of wealth are real; those of poverty are largely mythical, even under the most favorable circumstances. I say *mythical* because, like the Eldorado of old, they are mostly things of the imagination—merely fanciful. I have read the declaration of Mr. Chas. T. Yerkes, the millionaire, who amassed \$15,000,000 in 15 years, that wealth does not bring happiness and that of the late Geo. M. Pullman that he was happier in the days when he hadn't a dollar than he was with a wealth of \$50,000,000. Andrew Carnegie and J. Pierpont Morgan tell the same tale. J. D. Rockefeller is about the only one who is candid enough to confess that he is happier in the possession of wealth than he was without it. This is very nice for Mr. Carnegie, Mr. Morgan et al; but, if they were happier then, why not go back to those halcyon and dollarless days? This would be the last thing on earth these gentlemen would do.

The disposition of their great wealth need not bother them. They would have no difficulty in getting rid of it. The fact that these magnates are working early and late to add to their "burden" of wealth is evidence that they are merely "talking through their hats."

No man can truthfully say that he despises wealth, and why should he? "Believe not much them that affect to despise riches," says Bacon, "for they despise those that despair of them." "To cry out against the universal craving and struggling for the good things of this world, for which money is a synonym," says Matthews, "is to waste one's breath upon the air. Money means a *tight house*, the *warmest* clothing, the

most *nutritious* food, the *best medical attention*, health, books, pictures, music, the *best seat* in the concert or lecture room, the cars and even in the church; the ability to rest when weary in body or brain and, above all, independence of thought!"

It is not alone for the comforts, but for the influence they bring that riches are so intensely sought for and desired. A very beautiful idea of the power and influence of wealth is expressed in the following couplet from Col. John A. Joyce:

"Laugh, and the world laughs with you;  
Weep, and you weep alone."

The man with money has plenty of friends and ready assistance. Let that same man's wealth suddenly take wings and fly away, and his best friends will fly also. There is an old saying that "money makes the mill grind," and it is just as true of the legal machine as of the flour mill. Hence, Matthews would not have been very far wrong had he included *justice*, also, in the list of good things enumerated above as one of the synonyms of money. The man with *means*, the world over can purchase *brains* and *skill* to defend his cause, while the poor man is ground between the upper and nether millstones.

"Wealth means worth" says Ovid; "it purchases honors and friendships. Money is the *stimulus*, the *factotum* of all inventive genius. Without it *ambition*, *ability* and *high ideals* wither and die." The lack of money is but the wide open door of temptation to every man that struggles onward and upward.

Mr. Alexander McDonald, retired Standard Oil man, sounds the following alarm : "It is becoming impossible for the wage earner to make both ends meet. Wages have not kept pace with prices. We will have to have a readjustment somewhere. It is not good that the masses of our citizens should be forced to live a hand-to-mouth

existence. There is no incentive in work which produces nothing for the future." The saving ability of people should not be curtailed by the present menace of high prices. The result of such a condition can be nothing but harmful in its influence and effect. It discourages all the better traits of character. Sir Thomas More thus descants on the injustice of low wages: "For what justice is this, that a rich goldsmith or a usurer or, in short, any of them which do nothing at all (or if they do anything, it is of a kind not necessary for the commonwealth) should have pleasant and wealthy lives, either by idleness or by unnecessary business, when in the mean time poor laborers, carters, ironsmiths, carpenters and ploughmen by so great and continual toil be scarcely able to live through their work by necessary toil, without which no commonwealth could endure, and yet they have so hard and poor a living and live so wretched and miserable lives that the state and conditions of the laboring beasts be much better. Moreover, these poor wretches be persistently tormented with barren and unfruitful labor, and the thought of their poor, indigent and beggarly old age killeth them. For their daily wages be so little that it will not suffice for the same day, much less it yieldeth any overplus that may be laid up for the relief of old age."

#### THE SINGLE TAX.—What it is and How it Would Benefit the Poor.

The "Single Tax," as preached and advocated by the late Henry George and other apostles of the Single Tax, is a revenue tax based upon land *values* only, not land *quantity*; for instance, a 50x100 foot lot in the heart of the city of Chicago, by reason of its superior valuation, may bear a heavier tax than a thousand acres in a remote section of Cook county.

The Single Tax is not a tax on wealth production, the enterprising or the industrious. It would relieve

the poor and tenants generally from all taxes on their accumulations or earnings in the form of wealth. It would throw upon the market vast areas of vacant land now monopolized. Tenants would pay to the public lower ground rents than they now pay to landlords, and they would not be burdened with taxes on improvements which landlords now make and pay, and then collect from the tenants in the form of rent, plus the trouble of paying the tax.

Land is one of the natural or God-given elements, like air and water, and not something created by man—one of those elements put here from creation for the use of man, the birds of the air and the beasts of the forest and all of God's creatures, without which none of them would be able to live.

The Single Tax has for its primary basis, therefore, the contention that land, like air, ought to be free, and absolute ownership in land should not be allowed by the state. The government now permits landlords to control all the material conducive to industry and closes against the landholders all doors of honorable employment. We must all have the same equal right to the elements which nature has furnished for sustaining life, or it must be confessed that all have not the same equal right to life.

Men are often forced to beg or pillage because they are divested of their natural rights—the right to use the gift of nature, the soil; they are not generally beggars from choice.

Government is the creature of man, we are told. Is not the reverse, also, true with the character of the man varying with that of the government? Is it not too often true that the government, either by unwise laws or the failure to enact needed legislation, makes bad men out of good ones?

Between the monopoly of land on the one hand and unwise legislation on the other, the breadwinner finds

a very contracted channel within which to develop his industry or to earn a living. Pope hits the point when he declares:

“Now they who reach Parnassus’ lofty crown  
Employ their pains to spurn some others down.”

Having disclosed absolute ownership in land as one of the chief causes of poverty, its abolition and the adoption of the single tax are identified as remedies. With the adoption of the single tax one of the greatest forces for the equal distribution of wealth, also, will have been employed.

The questions of justice and ethics here, also, unavoidably arise, and Col. W. J. Bryan has this to say as to taxation: “If we do not reach justice in local taxation, how shall we reach it in national taxation? We consume in proportion to our needs. God gave us our needs and He distributed them in a democratic way. One man needs so much and there are limits to our needs. Our needs are uniform. We are made to pay for what we consume. Every economic question is at heart a moral question.”

The inquiry then passes to the field of practical statesmanship. It is seen that absolute property in land, instead of being necessary to its improvement and use, stands in the way of improvement and use, and entails an enormous waste of productive forces; that the recognition of the common right to land involves no shock or dispossession, but it is to be reached by the simple and easy method of abolishing all taxes save that upon *land values*. And this, upon inquiry into the principles of taxation, shows it to be, in all respects, the best and most equitable form.

The relation of man to land is, therefore, a basic relation, and there can be no solution of questions which vex the poor that do not involve the establishment of the principle that all men have a natural, equal

and inalienable right to the use of the earth and all its elements.

Physical life cannot exist without land or the use of it; but it can exist without the use of money, telegraph wires, railroads and other utilities. We must all have the same equal rights to the elements which nature has provided for the sustenance of life, for a denial of them is a denial of an equal right to life itself.

“Great truths are dearly bought. The common truth,  
Such as men give and take from day to day,  
Comes in the common walk of easy life,  
Blown by the careless wind across our way.

Great truths are greatly won; not found by chance,  
Nor wafted on the breath of summer dream,  
But grasped in the great struggle of the soul,  
Hard buffeting with adverse wind and stream.”

The poor are chafing under certain conditions and restraints which menace their health and happiness. Our laws make the conditions and we make the laws.

“Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law.”

—Oliver Goldsmith.

REMARKS—We often boast of our vast resources in *commerce*, in *manufactures* and in *art*; and of our unequalled and much-vaunted *republican form of government*, shutting our eyes to the other side of the picture and the conditions which surround the poor of our nation. Despite all the *wealth* and *civilization* of which we are wont to boast, there stalks abroad today the fearful spectre of poverty and want.

For every social wrong or evil condition, however, there must be a remedy. The remedy consists in nothing less than the abolition of the wrong, by abolishing the things which cause it. The wrong remedy is often applied for the cure of these evils. If we could avert *crime*, therefore, and cure social disease, we must remove the causes which produce them. As Henry George would have said, “If we would *cure a social disease*, we must go to the root,” as a skilled physician would do in treating the ailment. Remove the *cause*, and the *effect* ceases; this is the inexorable law. We cannot clear-up ground by lopping off the limbs at the *top*: but we must begin at the bottom. A balking horse, having no proper reasoning powers, kicks at the *whiffletree*, when it is really the *lines* and *bit* that hold him.

The fundamental and durable remedy must consist in the material betterment of the citizen, by every known method, and at every time possible. In this the state can have no small concern; and to it, it should render its heartiest support and co-operation.

### GIVE HIM A LIFT.

“Give him a lift! Don’t kneel in prayer,  
 Nor moralize with his despair;  
 The man is down; and his great need  
 Is ready help—not prayer and creed.

’Tis time when wounds are washed and healed  
 That the *inward* motive be *revealed*;  
 But *now*, whate’er the spirits be,  
*Mere words* are shallow mockery.

One grain of aid just now is more  
 To him than tunes of saintly lore;  
*Pray*, if you *must*, within your heart,  
 But give him a *lift*—give him a *start*.

The world is full of good *advice*,  
 Of *prayer* and *praise* and preaching nice;  
 But generous souls who aid mankind  
 Are like *diamonds*—hard to find.

Give like a Christian, speak in deeds,  
 A noble life’s the best of creeds;  
 And he shall wear a royal crown  
 Who gives a lift when men are down.”

FINIS











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